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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN RE APPLICATION OF :
TAKESHI NAGAI, ET AL. : EXAMINER: DIEP, N. T.
SERIAL NO: 10/661,697 : ALLOWED DATE: DECEMBER 11, 2006
FILED: SEPTEMBER 15, 2003 : GROUP ART UNIT: 2621
FOR: PICTURE ENCODING METHOD :
AND APPARATUS AND PICTURE
DECODING METHOD AND APPARATUS

COMMENTS ON EXAMINER'S STATEMENT
OF REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22313

SIR:

The "Statement of Reasons For Allowance" included at page 2 of the Notice of Allowance refers to various features stated in the independent method claim. However, the "Statement of Reasons For Allowance" does not make any delineation with respect to which independent claim the noted features are from. Claim 5 (renumbered as Claim 3), for example, is an apparatus claim, and does not recite steps to be performed. Applicants therefore object to this "global" approach to identifying "reasons for allowance."

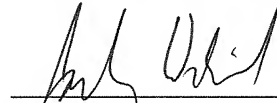
In addition, the characterization of some of the noted features is inconsistent with the actual claim language. For example, the second "encoding" step of Claim 1 is characterized as "encoding a reference picture signals, which are retrieved directly from the reference," whereas the actual claim language makes no reference to "directly," and is not limited to plural picture signals. The "multiplexing" step of

Claim 1 is characterized as “generating an output code stream as shown in figure 11, elements 110-113-114-115-106....” However, Fig. 11 of the present application is only a non-limiting embodiment of the present invention. Fig. 11 does not define the claimed invention.

Accordingly, a revised statement of reasons for allowance is recommended and respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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